

# Light reading

Seattle City Light: first carbon-neutral utility in the U.S.

Nov/Dec 2009

## Meeting challenges head on



There's plenty of uncertainty to go around right now: a pandemic, a tough economy, and for the utility, storm season means extra vigilance. I want to assure you that City Light has prepared for all those events and more.

Our Influenza Incident Management Team, activated last spring at the beginning of the H1N1 outbreak, moved to increased readiness when an official pandemic was declared. Our priority is to minimize impacts on customers should we have a reduced workforce.

City Light's financial outlook remains challenging. Although the utility is not supported by the City's general fund, we're affected by the economic downturn, especially the severe drop in natural gas prices. The decrease impacts our wholesale power sales — an important revenue source for us. We've executed prudent fiscal policies and reduced spending but budget pressures will follow us into 2010. Even so, City Light is more financially stable now than it has been for many years, enabling us to respond effectively in tough times.

Finally, we're prepared for the inevitable storms of autumn and winter. Our crews are ready to respond to weather-related events.

Through all of this, our motive remains the same: provide affordable, reliable, environmentally responsible power and the best customer service of any utility in the country.



-Superintendent  
Jorge Carrasco



## Conservation news

### Make a powerful decision: Support renewable energy

Promote clean, green energy by enrolling in Seattle City Light's Green Up program. Green Up supports the production and integration of wind-generated energy into the Northwest power grid. The program also helps City Light invest in new, local renewable energy projects like the use of landfill gas, dairy biogas and small-scale hydro.

Producing and integrating renewable energy into the power grid costs slightly more than energy produced by our existing hydro-electric projects. When you enroll in Green Up, you help create demand for emerging renewable energy projects throughout our region.

#### How it works

Choose to "Green Up" your electricity bill at a monthly rate of \$3, \$6 or \$12, or more — it's up to you. For more information or to enroll, call **206.684.3800** or visit [www.seattle.gov/greenup](http://www.seattle.gov/greenup). Thank you for making a powerful choice to support local green energy.

Cost per month* (1.5c per kWh)	kWh purchased per month	Equivalent to electricity used by the average Seattle home for:
\$3.00	200	one week
\$6.00	400	2 weeks
\$12.00	800	1 month

Program participation may be changed or cancelled at any time without penalty.

\*Seattle City Light billings are every 2 months.

## Green Up!

### Love those LED holiday lights

Strings of colorful lights brighten the darkest winters in the Northwest. Decorate with lights that use a fraction of the energy compared to regular mini-lights. Here's how light-emitting diode (LED) lights compare to conventional bulbs:

String of 35 lights	Wattage of string	Cost of energy (\$ .008 x 6 hours x 60 days)	Energy cost saving per string
LED	1.75	\$ .05	-
Mini-lights	17.5	\$ .50	\$ .45
C7(screw-based)	245	\$7.00	\$6.99

Mini-lights use ten times more energy than LEDs. Plus LEDs don't break or generate heat, and they can be used indoors or out. Up to 20 strings can be combined safely, and they're long lasting — 20 years with an average use of 360 hours per year.



## In your neighborhood: City Light @ work

City Light is in these neighborhoods to ensure you have reliable service:

- **View Ridge and Leschi:** Since late September, City Light crews have been rehabilitating existing underground power cables. They're injecting cables with silicone fluid, a method that can extend cable life by 20 years or more.
- **Capitol Hill:** Electrical distribution system upgrades continue with work in some areas running through 2011.
- **The utility's re-lamping project** continues, finishing the second of four phases before the end of the year by replacing all lamps in streetlights between Brandon St. and Denny Way. Report a streetlight out: **206.684.7056** or [www.seattle.gov/light/streetlight](http://www.seattle.gov/light/streetlight)

Visit our projects Web site and click on the  construction sign [www.seattle.gov/light/const\\_mgmt](http://www.seattle.gov/light/const_mgmt)



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[www.seattle.gov/light](http://www.seattle.gov/light)

**Customer Service 206.684.3000**

**City Light provides customers with the lowest rates in the U.S. among comparably sized cities and the lowest rates among neighboring Northwest utilities.**

This newsletter is available in alternate formats upon request. For translated versions in Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, Somali, Tagalog and Korean, call 206.684.3000.

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Seattle Climate Action



SeattleCAN.org



## Info and events

### City Light's life-support equipment program

For City Light customers who are dependent on electrical life-support equipment, we have a program that you should know about. It allows the utility to be aware of your presence and situation when there is a planned/unplanned outage or a credit action. Applications require a doctor's certification. To enroll, call **206.684.3020** or visit City Light's outage Web site: [www.seattle.gov/light/accounts/LifeSupport](http://www.seattle.gov/light/accounts/LifeSupport)

### Storm prep, pronto



With the change in seasons, it's time to gather up emergency supplies. Get information on how to prepare for power outages and other emergencies at this Web site [www.takewinterbystorm.org](http://www.takewinterbystorm.org). For an entertaining, informative video that offers preparation tips, visit [www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=4164](http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=4164)

### Our Twitter & blog

Customers can now follow City Light news with a free account on Twitter, the social networking site ([www.twitter.com/SEACityLight](http://www.twitter.com/SEACityLight)), and get news updates on the utility's blog, Power Lines ([www.seattle.gov/light](http://www.seattle.gov/light)). Both provide outage information and other news.

### New tree-protection requirements



Last spring, the City of Seattle adopted new tree-protection requirements that limit the number and type of trees that can be removed outside of environmentally critical areas where no development is proposed. The limits apply to all single-family lots 5,000 square feet or greater as well as commercial, low-rise, and mid-rise zones. The changes are intended to slow the loss of Seattle's urban forests and close a loophole used by developers to take down trees before applying for a development permit. Details at [www.seattle.gov/dpd/interimtreeregulations](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/interimtreeregulations)

### Project Share



Please consider donating to Project Share, a program that helps people in need pay their electric bills. Your gift goes directly to paying those bills and is tax deductible. Another option: "Round up" your utility bill payment to the next highest dollar amount. The round-up amount will be credited to Project Share. Donate online at [www.seattle.gov/light/help/share](http://www.seattle.gov/light/help/share) or send a check, payable to Project Share, to: **City of Seattle Treasury Services**  
**P.O. Box 34017**  
**Seattle WA 98124-1017**

### Westlake holiday tree: 25,000 LED lights

This year's annual lighting of the holiday tree in downtown Seattle's Westlake Center takes place on Nov. 27 at 5 p.m., with the tree twinkling through Jan. 1, 2010. City Light provides thousands of LED lights that decorate the tree. For details see [www.westlakecenter.com](http://www.westlakecenter.com)

### One car at a time



Sell or donate your car and earn more than \$500 of incentives in the City of Seattle's One Less Car Challenge. Incentives include deals from Zipcar, Bike Alliance of Washington, Cascade Bike Club, Tiny's Organic Produce, REI gear, and \$200 worth of bus passes. Plus, save thousands of dollars in car costs. See [www.seattle.gov/waytogo](http://www.seattle.gov/waytogo) or call **206.615.1550** for details.

### Correction

*The July/August issue of Light Reading reported on the purchase of new renewable energy. The article incorrectly stated that these purchases would double our conservation costs. It should have read that these purchases would double our investments in new renewables. Read more about the utility's efforts to green up its energy portfolio at [www.seattle.gov/light/news/issues/irp](http://www.seattle.gov/light/news/issues/irp)*